



Judicial Council of California

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

OFFICE OF COURT CONSTRUCTION AND MANAGEMENT

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October 7, 2010

Chairperson Norma Santiago

Board of Supervisors
County of El Dorado
330 Fair Lane, Bldg A
Placerville, Ca 95667
530-621-5390 Main

Re: El Dorado County Court Site Selection Process

Dear Chairperson Santiago,

As you are aware, the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) is in the process of selecting a suitable and viable location for which to construct the new El Dorado County courthouse. There appears to be much conjecture regarding the site selection process and the AOC at this time. This letter is to address and to make clear AOC's policy in the selection of a site in any county that we are contemplating a new courthouse.

The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) is the administrative agency of the Judicial Council, which has policy-making authority over the state court system. The AOC is composed of nine divisions and is responsible for a variety of programs and services to improve access to a fair and impartial judicial system. One of these divisions is the Office of Court Construction and Management (OCCM). The OCCM leads the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) implementation of the Trial Court Facilities Act of 2002, landmark legislation that shifts governance of California's courthouses from counties to the state. OCCM's work includes long-term facilities master planning for the trial courts; strategic planning for capital outlay and funding to support new courthouse design and construction; and facility and real estate management for California's trial and appellate courts.

With this in mind, the OCCM has been given the task of implementation, site acquisition, design and construction of numerous new courthouses through-out the state of California. This is a monumental task and is the reason the AOC needs to maintain a clear and transparent role throughout our process from site selection to court occupancy. The AOC understands the many factors and public emotions in the site selection process but needs to maintain an impartial attitude during this phase since the AOC requires good stewardship of the State resources and funds.

Chairperson Norma Santiago

October 7, 2010

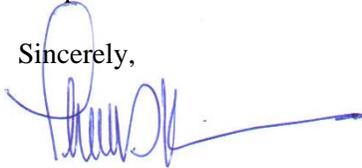
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In regards to our site selection process in El Dorado County, the AOC has hired the assistance of CBRE to locate various viable sites/locations through-out the county. We are in the process of evaluating each site in terms of location, access, site constructability, off-site infrastructure, site acquisition costs and development timing to name several of the major components in our selection process. The short list of sites will be evaluated by our AOC staff and the Project Advisory Group, which is comprised of AOC staff, the court, the county, the sheriff's department and the President of the Bar. All sites are given an equal opportunity to be evaluated but once the evaluation process has been completed and the sites ranked then a preferred site will be named. It is State mandated that the AOC must submit at least two sites for final site selection. At this time no final sites have been selected and no site has been determined to be preferred over any other site. It is unfortunate that there has been much misinformation and public conjecture regarding our site selection process that is unfounded and not true. This is the primary reason why the AOC must and always ensure an objective and transparent site selection process.

The AOC desire is to work diligently with the court, county agencies and the community to determine the best solution in site location. The AOC understands that your Board has directed your staff to evaluate some county sites and we welcome your input to AOC process and we will accept your evaluation under advisement. As with every process we have a time schedule to evaluate sites and determine a preferred location. If the process becomes elongated and runs past the allocated time then the project runs the risk of losing State funding and be placed on hold or terminated. The AOC is under a strict three year funding authorization to acquire the chosen property to the Public Works Board with the understanding that the selected property is "construction ready" with all off-site improvements in place. A construction ready site is a very important component in AOC's site selection to ensure that the project funding does not lapse and construction costs do not increase due to an extended time period. Either of these items can be detrimental to the ability for the project to move forward or obtain final funding.

The AOC wanted to take the necessary time to briefly outline for you and the Board our process for site evaluation so we do not have a misunderstanding of AOC role and procedure. The AOC looks forward to working closely with El Dorado County as we progress and develop this new courthouse. Please distribute this letter to your Board for their information and understanding. If you or the Board should have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact us or if you would like to meet to discuss our process.

Sincerely,



Ted Kopecko, Architect, NCARB & LEED AP
Project Manager,
Office of Court Construction and Management

cc: Jody Patel, Regional Administrative Director, AOC
Robert M. Uvalle, Manager, AOC/OCCM
Mary Bustamante, Senior Real Estate Analyst, AOC/OCCM
Hon. Suzanne N. Kingsbury, Presiding Judge, El Dorado Superior Court
Hon. James R. Wagoner, Assistant Presiding Judge, El Dorado Superior Court
Tania Ugrin-Capobianco, Court Executive Officer, El Dorado Superior Court
Sheriff Fred Kollar, Sheriff, El Dorado County
Rachel Miller, Esq., President of the Bar, El Dorado County
Sean Bondar, Areas Supervisor, Facility Operations, AOC/OCCM